Masters of Science Speech-Language Pathology
PROGRAM
POLICY HANDBOOK

Towson University
Towson, MD
Summer 2012
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I. PRE-REQUISITE COURSES

Welcome to the Speech Language Pathology Graduate Program at Towson University. This handbook is designed to answer many of the questions you might have as you proceed through the program. Please take time to review it carefully so you are prepared to move through the major and become a successful graduate of the program. The manual is divided into sections to help you find information easily, using the Table of Contents.

Where it all Begins.....You’ve been accepted, but there are some requirements you have hopefully fulfilled in your undergraduate program. If you’ve not completed all of these undergraduate requirements, you will need to work with your Program Director to design your customized graduate Program of Study. Your program director will contact you before your first semester of study to let you know about any pre-reqs that you need to fulfill. Both of you can work together to customize your program of study so that by the time you graduate with your Masters degree you have completed all pre-reqs.

PRE-REQUISITE COURSES

General Courses
- Life Science (e.g. Biology) 3-4 credits
- Physical Science (e.g. Chemistry, Physics) 3-4 credits
- Social Science (e.g. Psychology, Sociology) 3 credits
- Mathematics (preferably Behavior Statistics) 3 credits

Major Courses
- Phonetics 3 credits
- Anatomy & Physiology of Speech 3 credits
- Speech and/or Hearing Science 3 credits
- Language Development 3 credits
- Phonology/Articulation Disorders* 3 credits
- Language Disorders* 3 credits
- Introduction to Audiology 3 credits
- Aural Rehab (can be taken as an additional course in your grad program) 3 credits
- Clinical Observations & Techniques** (and 25 documented observation hrs) 3 credits

Students may enter the program with up to 2 missing courses (6 credits) in the major. Any of the four general courses may not have been taken, but we recommend that you finish them prior to graduation for your master’s degree. At the very latest, you must have submitted documentation of their completion before your Program Director can sign your ASHA Program Verification Form for your Certificate of Clinical Competency. You can take the General Courses at Towson University, a Community College, or you can ‘CLEP’ them by passing an Advanced Placement Examination for that course with the Education Testing Services (ETS). All major pre-requisite courses must be completed prior to taking a graduate level course in that subject area. For example, you will not be enrolled in SPPA 600 Language Disorders Birth to Five until you've completed an undergraduate course in language disorders.
*Some undergraduate programs combine Phonology/Articulation Disorders and Language Disorders into one 3 credit course. That’s okay, and we’ll enroll you in both of the graduate level disorders courses. BUT you must have completed another 3 credit course such as Neuroanatomy, Neurologic Speech and Language Disorders, or Fluency and Voice Disorders, to fulfill the ASHA required number of 26 undergraduate pre-req credit hours in the major.

**If you have not completed an undergraduate course in Clinical Techniques and Observations you must complete 25 hours of observation with an ASHA certified and State Licensed Speech-Language Pathology. You must submit a documentation form, signed by each Speech-Language Pathologist and listing their ASHA certification and licensure information. Also, your total number of undergraduate credits in the major must be at least 26. So if you did not complete a 3 credit course in clinical observations, you must have taken another undergraduate course in the major.

If you have not completed an undergraduate course in Aural Rehabilitation (AR), you will be enrolled in an AR graduate level course during your course of studies at Towson University. This course will be an extra 3 credit course load to the spring semester of your first year of study.

Once you have accepted our offer of admission and submit your final transcript that has your documentation of the date of the conferral of your bachelors degree, the SLP Program Director will review your undergraduate studies and advise you of any deficiency. He or she will customize your Program of Study so that you can fulfill any needed undergraduate course. In some cases, this may require an additional semester of graduate study.

Transfer of Graduate Credits Procedures
If you attended an ASHA accredited program and earned graduate credits but were unable to complete a Master’s degree, you may transfer up to nine graduate credits into your Towson Program of Study. You should meet with the SLP Program Director and provide syllabi for the courses you would like to petition to have transferred. The SLP Program Director will consult with faculty for approval. If you receive SLP Program Approval, you must complete a Graduate Transfer Petition Form with the Registrar’s office. Your Program Director can provide you with the form and instructions on how to file your petition.
II. PROGRAM OF STUDY

Over 95% of Towson SLP Graduate students are enrolled in full-time study. They take 3 courses (3 credits each) and a 3 credit practicum in fall and spring of their first year of study and in fall of the second year of study, for a total of 12 credits each semester. In summer, between first and second year, students take 4 credits of academic courses and 3 credits of practicum. In spring of the second year of study, the academic load is shortened to 7 credits with 3 credits of practicum.

Part-time students are required to complete all academic coursework in the sequence listed in the table below. However, one can choose to defer clinical practicum until all coursework is completed. Exceptions can be made if the student meets with the SLP Program Director to discuss extenuating circumstances. In most cases, the student will be required to petition the SLP faculty to obtain approval for a modified program of study and may be asked to provide medical documentation. Students must complete their Master’s degree program of study within seven years of date of initial enrollment.
The Speech Language Pathology program is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech Language Hearing Association. Students are required to complete their program of study in the order described in the table below. Clinical Practicum courses may be deferred until completion of most academic coursework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SEMESTER</th>
<th>COURSE NAME</th>
<th>COURSE #</th>
<th>CREDITS (XX)</th>
<th>Formative Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Phonological Disorders</td>
<td>SPPA 610</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>KASA Project (each academic course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acquired Neurogenic Language &amp; Cognitive Disorders I</td>
<td>SPPA 604</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language Development &amp; Disorders 0 to Preschool</td>
<td>SPPA 600</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On-Campus Clinical Practicum</td>
<td>SPPA 690</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Language Development &amp; Disorders in School-Age</td>
<td>SPPA 606</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>KASA Project (each academic course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dysphagia</td>
<td>SPPA 628</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>SPPA 713</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced On-Campus Clinical Practicum</td>
<td>SPPA 745</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Augmentative &amp; Alternative Communication</td>
<td>SPPA 712</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special Topics in SLP</td>
<td>SPPA 680</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clinical Practicum</td>
<td>SPPA 746 or 798</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>KASA Project (each academic course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Neuromotor Speech Disorders</td>
<td>SPPA 626</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acquired Neurogenic Lang &amp; Cog Dis II</td>
<td>SPPA 605</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>SPPA 614</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Off-Campus Clinical Practicum</td>
<td>SPPA 747 or 746 or 798</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>KASA Project (each academic course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Voice Disorders</td>
<td>SPPA 620</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Written Language Disorders</td>
<td>SPPA 710</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Off-Campus Clinical Practicum</td>
<td>SPPA 747 or 746 or 798</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Summative Assessment (COMPS or Research Project)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### III. CLASS REGISTRATION PROCEDURES & ADVISING

The SLP and Clinical program directors will set up your enrollment in PeopleSoft and email you with your schedule when you can complete your registration. Please email if you have concerns about your schedule or extenuating circumstances. In order to complete our graduate SLP program, all full-time first- and second-year speech language pathology graduate students are required to be available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. During this time period, you are required to be available to take classes, and/or work with clients in the TU Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic (usually first-year SLP graduate students), and/or work at a clinical extern placement site (usually second-year SLP graduate students). During your second year of study, you may also be required to enroll in classes that meet once per week, and may be scheduled any day, Monday through Thursday, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm.
All full-time first- and second-year SLP graduate students will be randomly divided up into two “cohorts” (by the Dept. of ASLD) for fall, spring, and summer classes and will typically enroll in the same class schedule. Students cannot request or petition to be placed in a particular cohort and/or take one class with one cohort and another class with another cohort. Moreover, students cannot request or petition a “preferred” or modified course schedule that differs from that pre-determined by the Dept. of ASLD. However, second-year graduate students who are working at a five-day a week externship placement and/or students who observe the Saturday Sabbath may be exempt from taking classes which are held in the afternoon and/or early evening on Fridays. Students in the accelerated 3-year program who enroll in undergraduate and graduate courses may also be given a modified course schedule pre-determined by the Department of ASLD. No other exceptions will be permitted.

All other students are expected to be available and willing to enroll in classes that may meet on Fridays until 6:00 pm. Likewise, ALL students are expected to be available and willing to enroll in classes that may meet Monday through Thursday from 6:00 pm to 9:00pm. Since this is a full-time program and a full-time commitment, scheduling of and issues related to childcare, employment, commuting, etc., need to be resolved on your own and scheduled around the SLP graduate program of study.

Please keep in mind that course, internship, and externship scheduling is an extremely complex task. The Department of ASLD schedules courses for 4 distinct undergraduate majors (with double majors), 3-year and 2-year SLP graduate students, audiology graduate students, etc., while ensuring there are no course or scheduling conflicts for students, faculty, internships, externships, etc. Room availability on campus and multiple other factors also need to be taken into account when devising our SLP graduate program of study.

Re-enrollment After a Leave of Absence

Sometimes because of personal or medical reasons, students may need to take a leave of absence. If you are considering a leave of absence, you should schedule an appointment with the SLP Program Director to discuss your situation and seek advice regarding how this will affect your program of study. Although medical or other forms of documentation are not required to take a leave of absence, the Graduation School requires that if you miss one fall or spring semester (or longer), you must complete the Graduate Application for Re-enrollment via the Office of the Registrar.

The purpose of this application is to assess a student’s residency status after a lapse in enrollment. It is important that the Registrars Office maintain high standards when it comes to determining student residency status as we are regularly audited by Maryland Legislative auditors and by the Maryland Higher Education Commission looking for errors in residency determination.

Therefore, the new procedure, effective fall 2012 for degree seeking graduate students, will be the same as it is for undergraduate degree students. Admitted degree-seeking graduate students who attended and received grades (including W grades) for at least one fall or spring term and subsequently missed one fall/spring or longer must complete the Graduate Application for Reenrollment via the Office of the Registrar. Students with continuous enrollment will not be affected by this policy as their accounts will be automatically activated for registration each term.

The reenrollment application and policy can be found on the Registrar’s website here: http://www.towson.edu/registrar/readmission.asp

Contact Erika Carlson-Hiles (ecarlson-hiles@towson.edu) if you have any questions.
IV. EXPECTATIONS OF A MASTERS SLP STUDENT

TOWSON UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students should be familiar with Towson University’s Policy on Academic Integrity which covers definitions and consequences for cheating, plagiarism, and other acts of academic dishonesty.

http://www.towson.edu/provost/resources/index.asp

As stated in the Graduate Catalogue, it is your responsibility to learn about and observe all university policies, regulations and procedures.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS

Many of your academic courses will require you to write a paper based on your own research of evidence based practice. Your research of the literature is expected to be thorough and to use resources that go beyond your class textbook, internet sites, and magazine articles. We expect you to use information from multiple peer reviewed resources such as journal articles. We expect well organized papers. Review the instructor’s expectations for the paper and the grading rubric. Ask questions if you don’t understand the expectations of a particular item in the rubric. We also expect thorough editing. Run the Spell Check and Grammar Check. Read the paper slowly out loud and/or ask a friend to read it also, checking for errors. Also double check your formatting, punctuation, and make sure that you have followed all items specified in the grading rubric.

All course syllabi include the instructor’s policy on plagiarism. Plagiarism consists of any of the following: (a) stealing a paper, (b) copying someone else’s paper or a portion of it, (c) hiring someone to write your paper, (d) buying a paper from the internet or (e) copying or paraphrasing text from a source without citation. Sometimes students are cited for plagiarism by an instructor because they paraphrased text from an article they have read but they did not cite the original source. According to the Towson University Code of Conduct, plagiarism is grounds for failing a class, and sometimes is grounds for expulsion from the program.

Students are expected to have a copy of the American Psychological Association (APA) Manual, 6th Edition or access the APA website (www.apastyle.org/elecref.html). We expect your papers to conform to APA rules for writing style, format, punctuation, citation, and reference list. Additional resources for you are to consult with a Graduate Assistant in the College of Health Professions Writing Lab or to use the APA resources available on-line at Cook Library.

At your academic orientation at the beginning of your program, the Program Director will provide you with a copy of a powerpoint presentation that summarizes the writing expectations and the SLP Graduate Level.

ACADEMIC FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Throughout your two year progression through the graduate Speech Language Pathology Program, you will complete both academic and clinical assessments. The Clinic Manual
describes the formative and summative assessments associated with your clinical practicum work. This handbook describes your academic formative and summative assessments.

**Academic Formative Assessments:**

Each academic course has an assignment designated in the syllabus as the Knowledge and Skills Assessment (KASA) assignment. The KASA assignment can vary according to the SLP Program specifications. The KASA assignment for clinical courses must be written (usually a paper or exam format) and demonstrates analysis and synthesis of evidence based practice. All KASA assignments must receive a passing grade (80% or higher). Students have three opportunities to Pass (Original and 2 re-submissions). Resubmission may or may not change the final grade, according to discretion of instructor. The instructor’s policy for resubmission and re-grading is stated in the course syllabus, along with the policy for instructor mentoring. If a student does not pass after three opportunities, the Graduate Program Director cannot check off that competency on the ASHA Program Verification Form and the student is advised to repeat the course. If the student chooses not to repeat the course, he or she may still graduate. However, the student will be advised that the Graduate Program Director cannot check off that competency on the ASHA Program Verification Form, which may affect the student’s ability to earn the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competency.

**Summative Assessment**

Each student must pass a summative assessment which can be either completion of the Comprehensive Examination or completion of a Research Project or Masters Thesis. Completion of a research activity does not fulfill the summative assessment requirement.

**Speech Language Pathology Graduate Program**

**Graduation Requirements Policy**

**Comprehensive Examination**

*(Approved, January 2012)*

**Department of Audiology, Speech Language Pathology and Deaf Studies**

Students enrolled in the Masters Program in Speech Language Pathology are required to complete one of the following three options as a final requirement for graduation: (1) Masters Research Project; (2) Comprehensive Written Examination, or (3) Masters Thesis. A brief description of the Comprehensive Written Examination is given below.

**COMPREHENSIVE WRITTEN EXAMINATION PROCESS**

Students who do not elect to complete a Master’s Research Project or Thesis must take written comprehensive exams as a requirement for graduation.

**Examination Eligibility and Application**

All academic coursework must be completed or in the process of being completed during the examination semester (e.g. spring 2012 for course completion as of May 2012). Most students will take the examination during the spring semester if they are expecting to graduate in May or
August. Students expecting to complete coursework in December will typically take the comprehensive exam in January and their degree will be conferred in May. However, once a student has completed all coursework, clinical clock hours, and passed the comprehensive exam, the Department Chair can write a letter in support of provisional licensure, even though the Master’s degree has not yet been officially conferred by the University. Students can also take the exam before completing all clinical practicum requirements. Exams will not be offered in the fall or summer semesters. Students with disabilities who require exam accommodations must submit necessary documentation with the application (see below).

Exam Dates (see below for more details)

Written exams for spring will take place on a Thursday and/or Friday in mid January. The exact date and location of the exam will be announced by the Speech Language Pathology Program Director in late September (for January comps). A make-up exam will be offered to students who fail any of the topic areas on the first exam. The minimum score for Passing is 80% or higher for each topic area. The make-up exam for spring will be held in March prior to spring break. The exam and re-take will only be given once each semester. Students who miss the exam in January, even for valid reasons, will need to take the exam in March. A third (and final attempt) will be scheduled for students who do not pass the March (second) exam. This third exam will be scheduled for a date determined by the faculty member who is mentoring the topic.

Exam Format

The exam is designed to prepare the student for the Praxis Exam and involves a multiple choice and/or short answer format. There are eight topic areas. One session will include the topic areas of Phonology, Child Language Birth to age 5, School-age Language, and Fluency. The other session will cover the areas of Neurospeech, Neurolanguage, Dysphagia, and Cognitive Linguistics II. Students are required to answer all questions. Students will not be given additional time to complete the answers unless a need for accommodations has been documented (See Below).

Students will also be provided with the exam, response sheet and blank paper. They should bring a calculator and number 2 pencils. No other materials can be brought to the examination unless a need for accommodations has been documented (See Below).

Students with Disabilities

This examination will be given in compliance with Towson University policies for students with disabilities. Students registered with Disability Support Services (DSS) need to provide documentation from that office and information as to what assistance is required for their success. Students who suspect they have a disability but do not have documentation are encouraged to register with Disability Support Services (Administration Building Suite 232, 410-704-2638). A memo from DSS authorizing any accommodations is needed before any changes can be made. This information must be provided to the SLP Graduate Program Director during the examination application process. Students without written documentation from DSS will not be eligible for any examination accommodations. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.
Examination Grading Process

Students will be given a random identification number to use as their identifier on all exams. Faculty members will grade the examinations without knowing who wrote each question. Each question will be graded by one faculty member with expertise in the content area. *Answers will be scored as (a) Passing (80% or higher), or (b) Fail (79% or lower).* There are no oral re-examinations. All students will be given written notification of their results.

Examination Pass/Fail Policies

Students must receive a grade of “pass” on all eight topic areas in order to pass the exam and be eligible for graduation. If a student receives “fail” score on one or more topic areas, the student is not eligible for graduation until questions in that content area are answered with a passing grade.

*Fail:* Students who fail any topic area will be eligible to take a second *written* re-examination in March of the same semester. Students who fail the first examination are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the faculty member who graded the exam. Faculty are permitted to share answers for questions missed, at their discretion. They can also suggest areas for further study. Students will have a different set of questions for each written re-examination. Students are not allowed to keep copies of their exams.

Re-examination Policy

A re-examination date will be scheduled for students who failed any topic areas covered in the January examination. It will be held on a Friday in March of the same semester. The reexamination can consist of up to a full day of testing, if needed. Students will only retake the topic(s) that were failed. For example, if a student failed the Neurospeech question, that student would need to retake only the Neurospeech portion of the exam. A student who failed both Fluency and Neurospeech would retake both portions. New questions will be developed for each content area. Students can retake all failed questions. Grading policies for this re-examination are identical to the first exam.

Final Re-examination Policy

A final re-examination will be scheduled for students who failed any questions during the March re-examination. The date for the final re-examination will be determined by the Speech Language Pathology faculty on a case-by-case basis. The re-take questions will be different from the previous two questions. *However, if a passing score is not achieved after a third attempt, the student will be dismissed from the program.*

Students have a right to appeal faculty decisions using procedures stated in the Graduate School catalogue.
Speech Language Pathology Graduate Program
Graduation Requirements Policy
Summative Assessment: Research Project or Thesis
(Approved May 2011)

Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders

Students enrolled in the Masters Program in Speech Language Pathology are required to complete one of the following two options as a final requirement for graduation: (1) Masters Research Project; (2) Masters Thesis, or (3) Comprehensive Written Examination. Also, students may choose to participate in a Research Activity. However, a Research Activity does not fulfill the Comprehensive Written Examination requirement.

Research Activity

Students can elect to assist a faculty research advisor on a research project. This could involve data collection or data analyses. Students may enroll in an Independent Study for one or two credits, but this is not required. However, a Research Activity does not satisfy the requirements for a Summative Assessment.

Masters Research Project Overview

Students can elect to work with a faculty research advisor on a research project. Students electing this option are advised to select a research advisor by the end of their first semester of study. Students can elect this option at a later date but need to realize that a delay in starting the project may result in a delayed graduation. The project consists of completing a mentored research project, writing a research paper suitable for journal publication, and an oral presentation. The paper and presentation are completed in the final semester of graduate study (spring or fall only). Students graduating in May or August complete the project in the spring, students graduating in January complete the project in the fall. A Master’s Thesis can also be submitted to fulfill the research paper requirement. More details for the research project are provided later in this document.

Comprehensive Written Examination Overview

Students who do not elect to complete a Master’s Research Project or Thesis are required to take a written comprehensive examination as a requirement for graduation. The exams are taken on a single day in January. For students graduating in either May or August, the exam is taken in January prior to graduation. For students graduating in December, the exam is taken in January following their completion of coursework. Students have to answer multiple choice questions in eight topic areas (Phonology/Articulation, Language Birth to Five, School-Age Language, Fluency, Neurospeech, Neurolanguage, Dysphagia, and Cognitive – Linguistics. More details are provided later in a separate document.
Master's Thesis Overview

The process of completing a Master’s Thesis follows most of the same procedures as the Master’s Research Project. The primary difference is that the thesis requires changes in the sequencing and formatting of the written paper. A thesis also requires different administrative procedures for approval both within and outside the department. Students interested in turning their Master’s Research Projects into a Thesis should meet with the SLP Graduate Program Director for further information.
MASTER’S RESEARCH PROJECT PROCESS

A. Preparation and Guidance

The Speech Language Pathology Graduate Program Director will meet with all interested first-year graduate students during the first week of the semester to review the research project process. Students will be given the names of faculty members who are willing to mentor student research projects. Students wishing to complete a research project need to set up meetings with faculty members to discuss the option. Initiation of the research project option is based on mutual agreement between a faculty member and student. Although the program will try to accommodate all students interested in research, faculty are under no obligation to agree to work with a particular student or project. In addition, the program is not required to provide a research option to every interested student.

Students are expected to work under the guidance of the faculty advisor to develop a research idea, implement the research, and analyze the results. Students who wish to complete a research project need to submit a formal application. This application is due four weeks after beginning the second semester of study or after the completion of 9 credits of graduate academic courses. However, students are encouraged to complete the application earlier. The faculty advisor reviews and signs the application before submitting it to the SLP Graduate Program Director. The formal application requires the following documentation.

- A one page abstract-style description of the research project.
- A time-table with completion dates for each step of the research project.
- A reference bibliography with a minimum of 15 refereed research articles related to key topics. Twelve of those references must be published within the last 10 years.

Once the application is approved by the SLP Graduate Program Director, the student can work with the research advisor to continue collecting and analyzing data for the project. The student is expected to write the research project independently and submit a first draft of the paper to the research advisor prior to the final paper due date. The research advisor can provide revision suggestions at this stage of the process. Once the first draft is returned, the student has to independently finish the paper without input from the research advisor, however the research advisor can still provide guidance in collecting and analyzing data. The final paper is due on the due dates listed below.

B. Research Project Written Paper

1. Due Dates

Students expecting to graduate in May or August must submit four copies of their Research Project Written Paper to the SLP Graduate Program Director by Friday of the second full week of the spring semester. Students expecting to graduate in January should turn in their written paper by Friday of the second full week the preceding fall semester. The Faculty Advisor should have already read a previous draft of the paper and provided comments for correction prior to turning in the final paper. Students who need extensions to these deadlines need to obtain the approval of their faculty research advisor who then notifies the SLP Graduate Program Director. Students who opt to extend the deadline need to realize that it may delay the date of graduation.
Students without valid, verifiable excuses who fail to submit a paper by the deadline will need to wait until the next fall or spring semester to turn in their paper. Students with verified documentation of a valid medical or family situation that warrants an extension of the due date need to contact the Graduate Director before the due date. **Requests for extensions made on or after the due date will not be considered.**

2. Research Project Written Paper Content

The research paper should be approximately 20-25 typed, double spaced pages (excluding references and appendices). The paper is written using the current edition of the APA style guide for formatting, tables, figures, references, and citations. The paper should include the information listed below and should be organized according to accepted standards used in journals published by the American Speech Language Hearing Association. The paper should include the information listed below.

1. **Introduction to the Problem** - briefly introduce the research problem addressed in the paper.

2. **Review of the Literature** - Relevant literature related to the project is presented in this section of the paper. The review should lead the reader into an understanding of the purpose of the research and the development of the research questions.

3. **Methods** – This section should thoroughly describe the subjects, materials, equipment, procedures, data collection procedures, analysis methods, and other relevant aspects of designing the research project.

4. **Results** – The results of the study are presented in this section. Results should be presented in text and table/figure form following APA guidelines.

5. **Discussion** – The results of the study are interpreted, analyzed and thoroughly discussed in this section. Each research question should be responded to within the discussion analysis. Application of research results to clinical processes should be discussed. Critical thinking regarding research findings should be included. Reflections of what should be changed in the project and rationales for the changes should be included.

6. **Conclusion** – Reflect on what was learned in the process of doing the research paper and provide directions for future research related to the project.

6. **Reference List**: Any text, paper, or electronic source in the reference list must be used as a citation in the paper (See APA, 2001). Students should include at least 15 relevant citations.
from refereed journals. Text books and web sites can be added as additional references but should not be the primary source of information. Students are not required to use references that were gathered in the application process.

Students who wish to submit their research paper as a Master’s Thesis should contact the Graduate Program Director for further instructions. The decision to submit the paper as a Thesis should be made before beginning the writing process.
3. Research Project Written Paper Evaluation Criteria

The written research paper will be evaluated using a 50 point grading scale by three separate reviewers. The faculty advisor for the project will be included as one of the three reviewers. The initial review process will be completed 3 weeks after papers are submitted. Students need to earn an average of 40 points on the written paper to pass. Those who do not pass will revise and resubmit the paper within one month. Two of the original reviewers and one new reviewer will review each resubmission. The faculty advisor will always be included as one of the three reviewers. Students have three opportunities to pass the written paper. Research project papers are graded on the following criteria.

1. WRITING STYLE AND MECHANICS (20 points): Writing is clear, concise, organized, and conforms to APA rules for writing.

   a. Ideas are presented clearly.
   b. Organization is logical and easy to follow.
   c. The report is written for a professional audience.
   d. There are no errors in formatting, grammar, spelling, punctuation, citations, and references.

2. WRITING CONTENT (30 points): The research project was discussed thoroughly and accurately, relevant literature was reviewed, and showed evidence of critical thinking.

   a. The review of the literature was thorough and related to the project.
   b. The statement of the problem and research questions were clearly stated.
   c. Methods were sound and clearly explained.
   d. Results were clearly presented.
   e. Discussion of the results is thorough and addresses each of the research questions. Analysis of how to improve the study is evident.
   f. Thorough critical thinking skills are evident.
C. Research Project Oral Presentation

1. Research Project Oral Presentation Dates

Oral presentation dates are not scheduled until the written paper has passed. Students who pass the written paper on the first attempt will have their oral presentations scheduled on a later date in the same semester. Students who need two or three attempts to pass the written paper may have their oral presentation dates delayed to the next fall or spring semester.

2. Research Project Oral Presentation Content

The oral presentation includes a 20 minute presentation followed by a 15 minute question and answer period, at which time the faculty reviewers ask questions about the written paper or oral presentation. The oral presentation should provide a summary of the research project in a format that is used in professional conference presentations. Relevant information related to the research problem is provided and methodology is quickly summarized. The majority of the presentation should focus on results, analysis of the results, and a discussion of the clinical implications of the findings.


The oral presentation is evaluated by three reviewers using a 50 point grading scale. Students need to earn an average of 40 points on the oral presentation to pass. Those who do not pass will have a second oral presentation date scheduled. Two of the original reviewers and one new reviewer will re-evaluate the oral presentation. Students have two opportunities to pass the oral presentation. Presentations are graded on the following criteria

1. Presentation (20 points)
   a. Speaking style is appropriate for a professional presentation.
   b. The research project is presented in an organized manner.

2. Content (20 points)
   a. Clearly summarizes the research problem and methodology
b. Clearly presents the results along with an analysis of the results.

c. Discusses the clinical implications of the research.

d. Thorough critical thinking is evident

3. Responds Appropriately to Questions and Comments (10 points)
   a. Able to apply content and clinical knowledge to adequately answer questions about the project.
   b. Demonstrates flexibility and critical thinking.
TOWSON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES & DISORDERS

SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY MASTERS DEGREE RESEARCH PROJECT
APPLICATION FORM

Name of Student: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Instructions: Two copies of the application and supporting materials are due to the Graduate Program Director four weeks after beginning the second semester of study. Students are encouraged to turn in their applications earlier.

PROSPECTIVE TITLE:

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

KEY TOPICS

List 3-5 key topics that will need to be researched in the process of completing the research project.

1) _______________________________________________________

2) _______________________________________________________

3) _______________________________________________________

4) _______________________________________________________

5) _______________________________________________________

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO THIS FORM AND SHOULD BE REVIEWED BY THE FACULTY RESEARCH ADVISOR:

[ ] Abstract Description of the Proposed Project
[ ] Time-line for Project Completion
[ ] Reference Bibliography List

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Faculty Research Advisor/Date

SLPGraduate Program Advisor/Date
Minimum GPA Requirements

Students must maintain an overall graduate GPA of 3.0. Course syllabi state the criteria for letter grades of A, A-, B+, B, C, and F. If a student’s GPA falls below 3.00, a letter of academic warning will be sent and the Graduate Program Director will request a meeting to advise the student with strategies regarding how to improve their GPA. The GPA must be restored to 3.00 within 9 units completed or within one year from the term in which the GPA fell below 3.00, whichever comes first.

A student on academic probation who does not restore the GPA to 3.00 as required will be withdrawn from the degree program. The 3.00 average may be restored by repeating a course in which the student earned a ‘C’ or ‘F’. No more than two courses may be repeated in the SLP graduate program. All requirements for the program must be completed within the time limitation policy of seven years from beginning enrollment in the graduate program.

For further details regarding the policy on minimum GPA, consult the Graduate Catalogue.
V. STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Students are advised to read the Graduate Catalogue to learn about Towson University Policies and the Graduate School Policies regarding Student Responsibility, Academic Standards, Appeals, Hearings, and Grievances.

Instructors clearly state course requirements in their syllabus, and major assignments have a grading rubric. If you concerned about the evaluation of an exam or other assignment, you should contact your instructor and request a meeting. Bring all documentation to the instructor at the time of your meeting. If you have further concerns after meeting with the instructor, you should contact the Department Chair and provide documentation of your concern.

If you have other concerns regarding an instructor, you should also first request a meeting with the instructor. If after this meeting you still have concerns, you should contact the Department Chair, again providing documentation of your complaint.

Complaint and appeal procedures regarding a comprehensive examination score are described in the Comprehensive Exam Policy.

If you have a concern regarding a clinical practicum issue, you should contact the Clinical Director.
VI. STUDENT CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY FOR AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY STUDENTS (revised June 2009)

Students enrolled in the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology programs in the Department of Audiology, Speech–Language Pathology and Deaf Studies will complete multiple clinical experiences and academic coursework as part of their academic program. The following policy is in effect for students enrolled in either program and is consistent with the College of Health Professions Student Policies and Procedures (Appendix A).

A) On-campus Clinical Practicum. The Towson University Speech, Language & Hearing Center provides a full range of audiological and speech-language services. Students will complete two or more clinical practicum experiences in the on-campus center under the supervision of certified and licensed speech-language pathologists or audiologists. The practicum experience can involve undergraduate Seniors, Masters students in Speech-Language Pathology, or Clinical Doctorate students enrolled in the Au.D. program, who participate in direct client contact. Prior to initiating enrollment in clinical practicum, a student must submit a signed copy of the College of Health Professions Criminal Background Check Student Rights and Responsibilities (Appendix B) to either the Departmental Chair (undergraduate students) or appropriate Program Director (graduate students). Completion of a criminal background check is required prior to starting the internship, as described by the College of Health Professions Student Criminal Background Check: Policies, Procedures & Instructions (http://www.towson.edu/chp/backgroundcheck/index.asp). The State of Maryland Application for Criminal History Record Check and Disclosure Statement Criminal Background Check must be completed for the State of Maryland and processed via the CJIS-Central Repository in Pikesville, MD. The results must be forwarded to the Director, Center for Professional Practices (CPP), Towson University. The CPP will notify the appropriate Program and/or Clinic Director of any finding regarding a student’s criminal background check. Upon such notification, a committee consisting of the Departmental Chair, appropriate Program Director and Clinic Director (e.g. Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology), and a representative of the Dean will convene to determine the student’s eligibility for clinical practicum on a case by case basis. Undergraduate students have the right to an appeal process through the Policy on Judicial Procedures as outlined in the current Undergraduate Catalog (2009-2009, p. 290-291). Graduate students have the right to an appeal process as described in Appendix E of the 2008-2009 Graduate Catalog. It is not the role of the departmental committee to retry a case or second-guess the criminal justice system. It is the role of the departmental committee to use conviction histories in decision-making regarding competence, conduct, moral turpitude, seriousness of the crime (misdemeanor vs. felony), eligibility for future licensure, and safety of the client and other students. A determination will be made regarding the student’s clearance to work in the center and/or to continue academic coursework.

a. If a student is charged with a criminal offense while completing a clinical practicum experience, the Departmental committee will convene to review the evidence and determine if any action should be taken prior to any court decision. The committee will follow the guidelines (as described above) to determine if the student can continue in their clinical practicum and/or coursework until the court ruling.
B) Off-Campus Clinical Practicum. The practicum experience takes place at affiliated sites i.e., schools, nursing homes, hospitals, private practices, and medical offices. This practicum experience involves students who have completed the On-Campus practicum experience and are eligible for Off-Campus practicums. They are supervised by certified and licensed speech-language pathologists or audiologists who are employees of the facility. For the off-campus practicum, a criminal background check is required and must comply with the procedures stated by the host agency (see College of Health Professions website regarding Policies and Procedures for description of the various Criminal Background Checks, and consequences of negative findings:
http://www.towson.edu/chp/backgroundcheck/index.asp

All students who discuss issues in regards to a criminal background check must sign a Release of Liability (see Appendix C). For more information on the policies of the College of Health Professions in regards to criminal background checks, please visit:
http://www.towson.edu/chp/backgroundcheck/index.asp

If you have any questions please contact us.

Dr. Karen Fallon  
SLP Program Director  
Department of Audiology, Speech Language Pathology and Deaf Studies  
410- 704- 2437  
kfallon@towson.edu

Robert Karp  
Admissions and Placement Coordinator College of Health Professions  
410-704-2653  
rkarp@towson.edu
APPENDIX A: COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1) Each placement site develops its own eligibility standards for student participation in the setting.
   - A finding on a student’s criminal background check may yield a rejection from some sites, but may not yield a rejection from other sites. The student can inquire about the reason for rejection from the site.
   - If a placement site rejects a student for placement, and the student believes the rejection is due to inaccurate findings by the vendor, the student may appeal the review findings to the vendor, who will follow applicable appeals procedures.

2) A student rejected from a site must meet with his/her academic placement coordinator prior to being placed in a second setting.
   - Criminal background check results are confidential and the results are not shared with the school.
   - The coordinator will review the procedures with the student to determine the possible next placement.

3) Following a rejection from a site based on criminal background check results, Towson University will attempt to place a student in another fieldwork site that also requires a criminal background check.
   - Towson University will notify the second site that the student was considered ineligible at the first site as a result of his/her criminal background check.

4) Towson University will not assign placement sites to students on the basis of the sites’ requirements for criminal background checks.
   - Some students may be required to obtain background checks and others may not; some sites may require drug testing or fingerprinting and others may not.
   - Site assignments will be based on a number of factors including availability, type of experience needed, and student interest.
   - Students are responsible for incurring the expenses involved with all levels of background checks.
   - Costs typically average between $48 and $62.
   - Fingerprinting, drug testing, and search of additional names or places of residence may incur additional costs.
   - It is anticipated that the background check requirement will grow increasingly common in health care and other settings.

5) Students who are rejected from two placement sites on the basis of their criminal background checks will be considered to be unable to complete program requirements and may be dismissed from their programs.
   - Students dismissed from one program in the College of Health Professions may not enroll in another program within the College.
   - Students are strongly encouraged to consider the ramifications resulting from any negative findings on their criminal background checks when they select a career in health care or education.
   - Students have the right to an appeals process through the Policy on Judicial Procedures as outlined in the Undergraduate Catalog 2008-2009 pp, 290-291.

6) Once students have been assigned to a placement site that requires a criminal background check, they must obtain that check no less than 21 days prior to the start of the placement.
Students who maintain continuous enrollment will generally not be required to obtain more than one background check during their tenure in the program.

Some placement sites may require more extensive background checking than others, which may necessitate additional work on the part of the student.

7) Although the College of Health Professions will make reasonable efforts to maintain updated files of the requirements of all placement sites, the student is responsible for contacting the site and verifying the need for a criminal background check.
APPENDIX B: COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK
STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This form must be signed, dated, and returned to your Program Director prior to beginning course work in the College of Health Professions.

The various College of Health Professions programs require that students successfully complete clinical courses/internships. These courses are generally offered at off-campus sites, including hospitals, nursing homes, schools, or other settings that are not part of the university. These sites may require that you disclose whether you have a criminal record or that you submit to a criminal background investigation as a condition of your participation in the clinical internship experience.

Depending on your clinical placement, you may therefore be required to complete a criminal background check, at your own expense. The university shall have no obligation either to refund your tuition or to otherwise accommodate you in the event your criminal record renders you ineligible to complete required clinical courses/internships.

In addition, upon completion or graduation from various programs, you may be required by state law to sit for certification exams or licensure which will allow you to practice your selected profession. At that time, you may be required to release your criminal record or have a criminal background check completed prior to sitting for the exam or prior to receiving a license to practice. A licensing board or agency is generally permitted to deny a license or to revoke or suspend a license or to reprimand a licensee if the applicant or licensee is convicted or has pled guilty or nolo contendere to a felony or other specified crimes. In the event you have a criminal record, the university urges that you make a timely inquiry of the applicable state licensing authority to determine the effects, if any, of your criminal record on eligibility for licensure or certification. Towson University shall have no obligation either to refund your tuition or to otherwise accommodate you in the event your criminal record renders you ineligible to complete certification exams or to receive licenses.

Towson University does not require a student to undergo a criminal background check. Any criminal background check completed is a voluntary action taken by the student, and any resulting information disseminated will be between the individual student and the clinical/internship placement site’s coordinator, or in the case of licensure, between the student and a certification board. If a student takes part in an on-campus placement, they are considered an employee of Towson University and they will be required to have a background check completed. If a student attends an off-campus placement in an educational setting where children are present, they will then be required, by that school or school district, to have a criminal background check completed.

“I acknowledge that I have read the above three paragraphs relating to the possible consequence of having a criminal record, that I understand the effects a criminal record may have upon my eligibility to complete the requirements of my major, sit for a certification exam, and obtain licensure.”

___________________________________
Signature Date

Revised 4/17/07
APPENDIX C: AGREEMENT, WAIVER, HOLD HARMLESS AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE

Name (printed or typed): __________________________________________________________

Notice: This Agreement is a contract with legal consequences. Read it carefully before signing!

In consideration of receiving the most full and complete advice possible with respect to my potential future as a (licensed) health professional, I have voluntarily chosen to disclose to ______________________ ______________________ (“Instructor”) the results of a criminal background check performed on me. I understand and acknowledge that Instructor may be required by law, or by the policies and/or practices of the University System of Maryland, Towson University or College of Health Professions to disclose this information to others (for example, in accordance with the Towson University College of Health Professions Policies and Procedures in the College’s manual “Student Criminal Background Check: Policies, Procedures and Instructions.”)

I understand and expressly assume all the risks and dangers of my disclosure of this information, and I hereby release, waive, discharge, and covenant not to sue Towson University, the University System of Maryland, the State of Maryland, and their officers, agents, servants, and employees (collectively, the “Releasees”) from all liability, claims, demands, actions, or causes of action whatsoever arising out of any damages, loss, or injury to me resulting from my disclosure of this information or from the Releasees’ re-disclosure of this information, pursuant to law or policy as described above. I hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees from any loss, liability, damage, or costs, including court costs and attorneys’ fees, that they may incur due to my disclosure, or Releasees’ re-disclosure, of such information.

I agree, for myself and my successors, that the above representations and agreements are contractually binding, and are not mere recitals. I agree that my failure or refusal to sign such agreements or releases shall in no way affect the validity of this Agreement, nor revoke or cancel any of the terms of this Agreement. I or any of my successors shall be liable for the expenses (including legal fees) incurred by the party or parties in defending against such claim or suit. This Agreement shall not be modified orally.

I have carefully read this form and fully understand its contents. I am aware that this is a release of liability, a waiver of claims, an agreement not to sue, an indemnity, and a contract between myself and Towson University and for the benefit of others described herein, I sign it of my own free will.

PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF A MINOR: I, as parent or guardian of the above named minor, hereby give my permission for my child or ward to disclose the above referenced information, and further agree, individually and on behalf of my child or ward, to the terms of the above.

Student’s signature: __________________________________________________________
Date: _________

Parent’s or guardian’s signature if student is under 18: __________________________________________
Date: _________

Signature of witness: __________________________________________________________
Date: _________
VII. Guidelines for Preparing for Graduation, State Licensure & ASHA Certification

General Guidelines:
As you prepare for graduation, it is very important that you apply for commencement. The deadline is usually just before or at the beginning of the semester you plan to graduate. You should fill out the application on-line, even if you think you might be eligible to graduate. Your graduate program director will clear you for graduation, provided you have completed all requirements. He or she will advise you if you’ve not completed any of the requirements and what your new expected date of graduation. The website to apply for graduation is:

http://www.towson.edu/registrar/graduation/graduate/applying.asp

Graduation Requirements:
To be eligible for graduation you must have completed:

- 26 units of undergraduate coursework in the major
- 48 units of graduate required coursework in the major
- 2 units of graduate electives
- 3 units of Aural Rehab are required, if not completed in your undergraduate program
- 400 hours of documented clock hours, as explained in the SLP Clinic Manual
- Successful completion of the Summative Assessment (Comps, Research Project, or Thesis)

The American Speech-Language Hearing Association minimum requirements for the Certificate of Clinical Competence includes transcript credits for coursework, CLEP or advanced placement (AP) examination credits in each of the following areas: biological sciences, physical sciences, social/behavioral sciences, and mathematics. We recommend that you complete these courses prior to graduation.

Praxis Exam:
The Speech-Language Pathology Praxis Examination is offered by the Educational Testing Service. The exam is available in either a paper-delivered examination or a computer-delivered format. We recommend that you complete the paper-delivered examination offered in March before you graduate, because you will most likely have recently completed the Comprehensive Examination. There is also a paper-delivered exam in April. While you do not have to have passed the Praxis Exam to graduate, you do need to pass the exam to earn State Licensure and ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence.

Seeking Employment:
Each spring our department hosts an Employment Fair, which you are required to attend in both your first and second year of study. This is a valuable opportunity for you to practice your interviewing skills and learn about job opportunities in the Maryland and nearby states. Also there is a Job Op Forum in the Blackboard SLP site. The Graduate Program Director will post advertisements sent by employers seeking recent graduates for CFY positions. Also,
Graduate Program Director maintains a list of employment settings held by Towson alumni. This list is available for you to review and obtain contact information.

State Licensure:

ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competency:
### VIII. SLP FACULTY MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>OFFICE</th>
<th>PHONE #</th>
<th>E-MAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celia Bassich, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Associate Clinical Faculty</td>
<td>Van Bokkelen Hall Room 103C</td>
<td>410-704-2449</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bassich@towson.edu">bassich@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna Coons, M.S</td>
<td>Clinical Faculty</td>
<td>Towson City Cntr, Rm 415</td>
<td>410-704-3859</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dcoons@towson.edu">dcoons@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Evitts, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Van Bokkelen Hall Room 109F</td>
<td>410-704-3860</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pevitts@towson.edu">pevitts@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Day, M.S</td>
<td>Clinical Faculty</td>
<td>Towson City Cntr, Rm 420</td>
<td>410-704-4022</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kday@towson.edu">kday@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Fallon, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Associate Professor/SLP Program Director</td>
<td>Van Bokkelen Hall Room 103E</td>
<td>410-704-2437</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kfallon@towson.edu">kfallon@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Geary, M.S.</td>
<td>Assistant Clinical Faculty</td>
<td>Towson City Cntr, Rm 417</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:lgeary@towson.edu">lgeary@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon Glennen, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Professor (SLP)</td>
<td>Towson City Cntr, Rm 204</td>
<td>410-704-4153</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sglennen@towson.edu">sglennen@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iona Johnson, M.S</td>
<td>Clinical Faculty</td>
<td>Stephans Annex Rm 141</td>
<td>410-704-5376</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ijohnson@towson.edu">ijohnson@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva Hester, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Van Bokkelen Hall 103D</td>
<td>410-704-3096</td>
<td><a href="mailto:echester@towson.edu">echester@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Pellowski, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Van Bokkelen Hall 109E</td>
<td>410-704-5899</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mpellowski@towson.edu">mpellowski@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Pottash, M.A</td>
<td>Clinical Program Director</td>
<td>Towson City Cntr, Rm 425</td>
<td>410-704-3607</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kpottash@towson.edu">kpottash@towson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IX. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY STUDENTS IN THE SLP GRAD PROGRAM

- **What is the minimum GPA I need to have?**
  You must maintain a 3.0 GPA. So if you earn a ‘C’ in one class, you must have an ‘A’ (not an A minus) to bring your semester average to a 3.0. The SLP program advisor will send you a letter if you earn a ‘C’ and request a meeting so you can discuss how to bring your program of study to an appropriate GPA. Your program advisor will also help you to re-enroll in the class so you can master the material.

- **What if I have a problem with an instructor?**
  Instructor’s have stated their course evaluation criteria and have described all graded assignments. If you have a problem with an instructor or receive a low score on an exam or assignment, you should email or ask the instructor to meet with you in the instructor’s office. It is inappropriate to initially contact the Program Director or Department Chair. However, if after meeting with the instructor you do not believe the conflict or problem has been resolved, you request to meet with either the Program Director or Department Chairperson to discuss your concerns and seek advice.

- **How do I appeal a failure on my Comprehensive Exam?**
  Each comprehensive exam topic is objective and the instructor has indicated the point value of all questions (multiple choice and short answer). A minimum of 80% is required to earn a passing grade in that topic. If you do not pass a particular topic area, you should request a meeting with the instructor. At that time, the instructor will provide you with feedback and specific suggestions for how to study for your re-take examination.

- **What if I haven’t completed all my clock hours by May of my second year of study?**
  Occasionally students are unable to complete the 400 required clinical clock hours as they approach their anticipated date of graduation. If you find yourself in such a situation, you should contact the speech-language pathology clinical director to make arrangements to complete the required number of hours and to determine your date of degree conferral.

- **Can I be a part-time Speech Pathology Graduate Student?**
  The Speech-Language Pathology Program of Study is designed to be a full-time program, involving classes that take place during the daytime during the first year of study and in the afternoon and early evening in the second year of study. Clinical practicum involves a additional 3 credits of study each semester and your practicum schedule is arranged around your academic course schedule. Students must take 9 credits of academic study each semester because courses are arranged in sequence, meaning that particular courses must be completed before taking those occurring later in your program of study. However, some students choose to defer completing clinical practicum until some or most of their academic coursework is completed.

- **I need to take a semester off, what should I do?**
  Sometimes, because of personal, family, or medical reasons, a student may find that they need to take a semester off. Actually, the graduate school policy states that you have seven years from entering the SLP Masters Program to complete all degree requirements. If you think you may need to take a semester off, you should meet with the SLP Program Director to discuss your reasons and to revise your program of study. You will also need to submit an application for re-enrollment with the Registrars Office. The re-enrollment application and policy can be found on the Registrar’s website here: [http://www.towson.edu/registrar/readmission.asp](http://www.towson.edu/registrar/readmission.asp)
• What if I am given a citation or a charge for a misdemeanor or felony that may affect my future Criminal Background Check?
It is up to you to disclose to the Program Director any incident that might affect your ability to pass a Criminal Background Check after you have entered the program. Your initial Criminal Background Check is sufficient for one year. You will need to complete an additional background check to qualify for off-campus practicum. Should an incident occur after you’ve completed your first background check, you should meet with the program advisor to discuss your situation and seek advice regarding how this may affect your program of study. Prior to such a meeting, your advisor will ask you to sign a waiver (see Appendix C in the Criminal Background Policy).